

## IDENTIFYING ELEMENTS OF A PLOT

# Ayden's Day at the Lake

"Finally... a hot day!" thought Ayden. He had been waiting for a hot summer day to conquer his goal of learning to water ski. He had attempted the feat countless times last year, but had never succeeded. This summer, he was determined to get up out of the water and actually ski! He had convinced his parents to hitch up the boat and head to Brown's Lake, a short 15-minute drive from their house.

Now he was out floating in the water. His life jacket was secured, and he gripped the rope. "Okay, you can do this!" Ayden whispered to himself. He nodded to his dad in the boat, and soon felt the rope tighten up as the boat pulled forward. Before he knew it, though, his skis were behind him, and he knew there was no hope of getting up. He let go of the rope, and slapped the water in frustration.

The boat circled around, his dad returning the rope to him to try again. "Okay, now you remember what it feels like when I take off. Keep those skis in front of you and the boat will take it from there," his dad said.

"Okay," Ayden replied.

Soon he was ready for his second attempt. Ayden nodded to his dad. The boat pulled forward as he focused on keeping the skis in front of him. Up...up...up... WOHAI! Too far! He had risen out of the water, but then fell back into the water on his back. He was excited, though, as this was the first time he had actually gotten out of the water! He cheered and pumped his fist in the air.

"You were up!" Ayden's mom exclaimed as they circled around him again.

"I know!" Ayden shrieked, grinning from ear to ear. "Get ready... I'm going to nail it this next time!"

He was right. On his third attempt, he got out of the water and stayed up! In fact, he skied for almost two minutes before his skis hit a wave and he fell.

The boat circled around. "You did it! Congratulations!" His parents told him.

"Thanks! That was so much fun!" Ayden exclaimed. "Am I ever exhausted now, though. I'm ready for a break."

At home that night, he recalled his three attempts, and the two minutes he spent skiing atop the water. "What an incredible feeling," he thought, "I can't wait to go skiing again!"

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# Stranded in Wyoming

This seemed like the longest road trip ever to Kristen. She couldn't wait to arrive at Yellowstone National Park. Her friends had told her about all the fascinating natural wonders she would see there. They had also warned her about the long car ride to get there, but she still felt like she had been in the car with her parents forever! To make matters worse, her dad decided to "help" by taking a shortcut he had found on a map, but the rough country road was making her carsick.

Suddenly the car made a loud clunking sound. Then it slowed to a stop. "What's going on, Mark?" Kristen's mother asked her father.

"I don't know, but it's not good," her father replied. He pulled to the side of the road, popped the hood, and stepped out to look at the engine. A minute later he returned to the driver's seat. "We'll need to call a towing service."

Kristen's mom groaned. "I was afraid you were going to say that. We lost cell phone service about 15 miles back."

"You mean we're stranded here in the middle of nowhere?" Kristen exclaimed.

"Kristen, we're not in the middle of nowhere, we are simply in rural Wyoming," her dad said. "Someone will drive by soon."

Two hours later, a cow in the pasture was the only moving thing they had seen. Suddenly, a pickup came barreling up the road behind them. They all waved their arms wildly. They were overjoyed when the vehicle slowed to a stop.

They told the man about the situation that had left them stranded along the desolate road. It turned out that this man owned a ranch nearby. He fixed his own ranch equipment all the time and knew exactly what needed to be done to fix their car! He promised he would return shortly with the tools necessary to repair the engine.

Minutes later, not only did the rancher return, but his wife as well. While he fixed the car, she shared a snack of cookies and lemonade with them while telling them what life on a ranch in rural Wyoming was like.

Before long, the rancher closed the hood. "You're all set," he said.

"I can't thank you enough!" Kristen's father told him. "What do I owe you?"

"Not a thing," the rancher said, "just pay it forward someday. When you find someone in need, help them out and don't ask for anything in return."

"You have my word," Kristen's father replied. Soon, they were back on their way, thankful for the kindness of strangers.